



## Appalachian Trail Museum to Open

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Gardners, Pa. - A former grist mill at Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Cumberland County is about to become the first museum dedicated to the Appalachian Trail.

Larry Luxenburg, president of the Appalachian Trail Museum Society, says the Old Mill will show the history of the trail and those who hiked it.

"Our principal artifact is the Earl Schaffer shelter that was built by Earl Schaffer about 50 years ago. He was the first person to hike the whole Appalachian Trail in 1948," Luxenburg said.



The 200-year-old mill is located about two miles near the midpoint of the Appalachian Trail. For hikers, it will be more than a rest stop. It will show how the trail blazed the way for America's other hiking trails.

"You have the Pacific Crest Trail. You have one that goes east-west across called the American Discovery Trail. And there's numerous, numerous other trails all over the country," trail volunteer Jack Danner said.

The museum hopes to become part of the hiking tradition at the half way point. "Tradition is once you get half way along the trail, you have to buy a half gallon of ice cream and finish it in one setting," New York hiker David Keegan said.

Whether it's the story of the trail blazers, or the hiker who made the trek with a seeing eye dog, it is the people that make the trail.

"In Tennessee they'll say 'You all come back now.' In Vermont they might say 'don't hesitate to return.' You're on the same trail, different cultures, different language," Danner said.

The grand opening of the Appalachian Trail Museum will be Saturday, June 5. For more information, visit [www.atmuseum.org](http://www.atmuseum.org).